



H.Res. 912 – Condemning the assassination of former Pakistani Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto and reaffirming the commitment of the United States to assist the people of Pakistan in combating terrorist activity and promoting a free and democratic Pakistan.

FLOOR SITUATION

H.Res. 912 is being considered on the floor under suspension of the rules and will require a two-thirds majority vote for passage. This legislation was introduced by Representative Gary Ackerman (D-NY).

H.Res. 912 is expected to be considered on the floor of the House on January 16, 2008.

Foreign Affairs Committee Ranking Republican Ileana Ros-Lehtinen (R-FL) and Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on the Middle East and South Asia Ranking Republican Mike Pence (R-IN) have cosponsored this legislation.

BACKGROUND

On December 27, 2007, former Pakistani Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto was killed along with over 20 other bystanders. The assassination occurred less than two weeks before the parliamentary elections scheduled for January 8, 2008. The elections have been rescheduled for February 18, 2008. A previous assassination attempt against Mrs. Bhutto occurred when she returned to Pakistan from a self-imposed exile in October 2007.

The assassination of Mrs. Bhutto has sparked further political and economic turmoil in Pakistan. In the immediate aftermath, more than 50 people were killed while businesses and government offices were looted and burned. Additionally, stock markets are down, the rupee is sinking, and capital inflows have dropped significantly.

The current upheaval comes on the heels of months of political unrest in Pakistan, to which Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf responded by declaring a state of emergency and suspending the constitution for six weeks. He utilized the additional emergency powers to suppress political opposition, weaken the judiciary system, and stifle independent media in an attempt to preserve his hold on power. During the state of emergency, the Pakistani Supreme Court dismissed challenges to President Musharraf's October election victory by opposition groups.

Pakistan is a key ally in the War Against Radical Militant Islamists. Since September 2001, Pakistan has provided assistance with rooting out al-Qaeda and other terrorist organizations in Pakistan, Afghanistan, and the surrounding areas. The United States has provided Pakistan with over \$5,000,000,000 in assistance over the past five years, as well as an additional \$5,000,000,000 to reimburse Pakistan for expenses made combating terrorism. In addition to cooperation in fighting terrorism, the U.S. is working to facilitate economic development, enhance education, combat corruption, encourage good governance, and promote democracy in Pakistan.



LEGISLATIVE DIGEST

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SUMMARY

H.Res. 912 resolves that the House of Representatives:

- Condemns in the strongest terms the assassination of former Pakistani Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto and expresses its condolences to her family and the families of all those who were killed or injured in the attack of December 27, 2007;
- Supports efforts by Pakistan to expeditiously bring to justice those who have perpetrated this cruel and cowardly attack;
- Welcomes the provision of assistance by the Government of the United Kingdom of expertise to the Government of Pakistan in the conduct of the investigation of the attack;
- Commends the government of Pakistan for accepting such assistance and urges that government to allow experts from the United Kingdom to participate in such investigation to the fullest possible manner;
- Urges the people and Government of Pakistan to be relentless in its pursuit of a democratically elected government, including the holding of free and fair elections at the earliest possible opportunity;
- Expresses its support for the freedom of the media, the ability of political parties to express their views without restriction, and the independence of the judiciary in Pakistan; and
- Reaffirms the commitment of the United States to assist the people of Pakistan in combating terrorist activity and promoting a free and democratic Pakistan.

STAFF CONTACT

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